

INTELLIGENCE:

Helms at the Helm

For months the talk in Washington was that the President was about to reorder the nation's vast, \$6 billion military-civilian intelligence complex. Last week, in a two-page low-key announcement, the White House disclosed that Mr. Nixon had given Central Intelligence Agency Director Richard Helms, 58, a broad mandate to unshackle the U.S. intelligence-gathering agencies. Putting Helms at the helm, insiders predicted, might prove to be the most significant power realignment in U.S. intelligence since the CIA was founded in 1947.

Helms's new job falls well short of over-all intelligence "czar." Presidential adviser Henry Kissinger is still virtually the sole conduit of intelligence information to the President. And, significantly, Kissinger will chair the new National Security Council Intelligence Committee, which Mr. Nixon also created, to evaluate White House-bound data. But the President's order frees Helms of many of his routine CIA duties (which will be taken over by his deputy, Lt. Gen. Robert E. Cushman Jr.) so that he can devote his time to the task of coordinating and streamlining the nation's far-flung and disparate intelligence organizations, which include the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency.